



BRANCH OF WILDLIFE REFUGES NARRATIVE REPORTS

MR. SALYER

MISS BAUM

MR. CRAWFORD

Operations

MR. REGAN

MR. DuMONT

Land Management

MR. ACKERMECHT

DR. MORLEY

Habitat Improvement

MR. BANKO

MR. STILES

MR. KUDICHEK

Stenographers

REFUGE CHASE LAKE and N. DAK. EASEMENT  
REFUGES \* DISTRICT NO. 6

PERIOD JAN - APR 1958

CHASE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
AND  
NORTH DAKOTA EASEMENT REFUGES - DISTRICT NO. 6

Water levels in Chase Lake and Easement Refuges of District No. 6 have been near normal desired elevations as a result of last fall's heavy rainfall. The absence of snow accumulation and light precipitation this period produced little or no run-off. The favorable habitat now available from good water conditions can only be attributed to the carry-over from last fall and early winter. Levels on most of the easements are showing a gradual decline at the end of April.

Fair numbers of migrant waterfowl were using all areas during the Manager's brief visits late in April. Factors conducive to rapid rates of spring migration influenced the entire district. This year's use as observed and reported was apparently below normal years. There was no evidence of any substantial build up for any species of waterfowl. Few geese used any of the units, and duck species used them for only short rest and feeding stops. Habitat is favorable to normal nesting for the areas, but of course dependent on the summer's rainfall. Ample food is available in grain left due to wet conditions last harvest season on and near the easements. Cover is a different situation. Extensive grazing on a few of the areas has greatly decreased protecting and nesting cover. Others offer excellent protection.

All easements were inspected at least once over, primarily for waterfowl use, orientation and familiarization of new manager, condition of signs and structures and for necessary repair work.

CHASE LAKE:

Practically all of Chase Lake is now under complete administration by the Bureau. There remain four tracts for which we have not received "clear title", or authorization to fully administer them as a part of the unit.

The administration of Chase Lake Refuge has, as yet, been very limited. A temporary land use program was prepared and approved. Two permits for cooperative farming were issued to former land owners and one tenant in the interest of providing some cultivated wildlife food and favorable farmer - Service relationship. No additional permits will be issued this year, or before the submission and approval of a permanent land use plan. This plan will be governed to a large extent on a soil capability survey now being conducted by the Soil Conservation Service. The final plan is to be prepared upon completion of this survey. Due to the size of the area and apparent soil types, no grazing or haying will be recommended.

The entire area must be fenced and reposted this summer providing the necessary funds will be made available. The project can best be accomplished under contract to local people. One application for the job has already been received.



The area was first visited by the manager on March 31, at which time the two permittees were signed up. Roads were very soft as yet and travel to the farming units was possible only with tire chains and on foot. Only a few mallards and pintails were present at this time. The unit was again inspected on April 11th, in company with Mr. Howard Hueneke. Potential land use was discussed and looked over, and waterfowl observed. A few pelicans, one flock of Canada Geese and several duck species present by this date. A complete waterfowl survey was conducted by the Manager on April 25. A good representation of common species were present on the fresh water unit. Few birds other than pelicans were observed on the main lake.

The fresh water unit was only about 8" below full level. The large Chase Lake level was at the normal high water marks. The fresh water dike and natural spillway is in good condition and well protected by natural vegetative growths.

A fair population of sharp-tailed grouse was evidenced by frequent observations of singles, pairs and small flocks. Pelicans already are making preparations for nesting, and their numbers completely covered the nesting islands. Consideration has been given to the creation of another nesting island by cutting off the long peninsula which extends into the main lake from the east shore lane. This would undoubtedly increase the pelican nesting population.

Abundant food is available to migrant birds and for those that nest on the area. Several fields of grain were not harvested this past fall due to extreme wet conditions. One known field was unharvested due to mallards getting the majority of the yield during wet periods. Feeding behavior of ducks in the fresh water unit were indicative of good growths of seed bearing aquatics last year. Ample cover should encourage considerable nesting of mallards and teal as well as some divers in the emergents of the fresh water unit. Abundant shoreline cover has been undisturbed. No indication of botulism, other infections or sickness observed.

Three white-tailed deer were observed on April 25, and numerous signs were seen along shorelines. Their winter was made easy by mild weather.

No informant, at present, is available on the status of fur-bearing animals and rodents. A few signs observed on the short visits and inspection trips indicate a normal population of animals for this section of North Dakota.

Two marsh hawks and one red-tailed hawk were seen on April 25. A few crows were present.

No information available on fish life in the fresh water unit. The alkaline content in the main lake will never support desirable fish life unless it would be bullheads that might withstand it.



In view of the sand and gravel content of the soil, it is apparent that soil conservation practices will have to be practiced in the future. Plans for this will be in coordination with the Soil Conservation Service. Additional Wildlife cover would prove beneficial and can best be provided by new shelter belts. The area has a lot of possibilities for successful sharptail and pinnated grouse management.

#### BONEHILL CREEK;

Waterfowl count and area inspection was made on April 17. Water levels were low from lack of snow and light rainfall. Good rains will be necessary to maintain the area in a useful condition this summer. The dam was noted to be in good, sound condition, and refuge signs show surprisingly little damage.

Very heavy damage to any and all water surrounding cover has resulted from overgrazing. The nesting potential is very low. Apparently the area serves the greatest value at migration times, especially in the fall, when it will afford escape from gun pressure.

No upland game birds were observed on April 17.

Badgers and gophers are about the only animals that would be attracted as permanent residents.

#### HALFWAY LAKE

This unit showed a very good population of diving ducks on April 25, fair numbers of other common species, and was the first place to show any shore birds.

According to past records, the area is about average in water level or perhaps a bit higher than normal. Gravel and sand bottom on the lake visible along shore lines has not supported desirable aquatic vegetation for a good duck producing lake. However, it is a good clean lake apparently very attractive to migrant birds. Fair cover is adjacent to the lake on the south and west sides. Extensive grazing has played havoc with cover in other areas. No good source of food was observed in the near vicinity.

No grouse or pheasants were seen on the area this date, April 25.

No information was available on animals or predaceous birds.

#### HOBART LAKE

Hobart lake was visited twice. Once in company with former manager, Nelius Nelson, on March 7, and again personally on April 17. No waterfowl was observed on March 7. The new super highway was observed and potential effects on the area as a refuge were considered. Heavy construction equipment was operating on April 17, keeping most waterfowl well away from the new road grade. Fair numbers of mallards and other species were present on April 17.

Effects of the new highway now located over our dam and spillway on water conditions and waterfowl useage remain to be determined.

Remains of last year's good growth of emergent acuquatics in the northern end of the refuge was present and it was here where most of the waterfowl were found on April 17.

No upland game birds were observed on either trip. Undoubtedly, the increased disturbance of construction and future highway travel will greatly decrease wildlife value of the area.

#### LAKE GEORGE

When the manager visited Lake George on April 25, very few waterfowl species were present. There were less here than on any other unit. Water levels were high for about normal at this season.

Food and cover conditions were observed to be poor. Heavy grazing has prevented protective growth of cover over much of the area. There were no desirable food sources located. The picnic, or recreational area showed no sign of use yet this spring.

The manager was impressed by the comparative low populations of waterfowl on Lake George and also in the general vicinity. No solution is offered, unless it would be the early extensive farming operations and this is doubted.

No upland game birds, were observed. No deer were seen, and very few signs. Raccoon signs were common near the fresh water dam.

All structures were in fair to good condition with no immediate repair deemed necessary.

The Manager pondered the idea of illegal hunting here, but could find no evidence thereof.

#### STONEY SLOUGH

Stoney Slough was visited on April 17, for waterfowl survey, structure and posting inspection, and general condition of the area. Water levels were found to be high, the general condition of the area was good, and an impressionable number of waterfowl present.

A farmer, Mr. Harry Fossum, was complaining about the ditch connecting unit 2 and 3 of being plugged causing his hay meadow to flood. This ditch was inspected and has become choked with cattail and bulrush. It will have to be cleaned either with ditching dynamite or dragline to permit desired drainage from units 1 and 2.

Food and cover conditions were favorable. The area is of sufficient size to include adequate variation in terrain for the provision of suitable nesting cover for waterfowl and upland game birds. This is true even with present heavy grazing and cultivation.

One cock and one hen pheasant, one pair of "Huns" and a small flock of sharptails were observed.



Signs of predatory animals indicate a low population. No species of animals or birds usually considered as detrimental were observed in surplus anywhere near the refuge.

The area, at present, appears to be above average in benefits to wildlife, and has many possibilities for being developed into a very valuable refuge.

All control structures, other than the ditch were in good condition and need no repair work.

#### TOMAHAWK LAKE

Mr. Nelson and the manager visited this area on March 7, and the manager checked waterfowl use and general condition on April 17. This is the easement that profited less from good rains of last fall than any of the others. Water level was low on both dates with no appreciable fluctuation.

Waterfowl food sources were scarce due to low levels and no cultivation on the area. There is of course, ample food some distance from the unit. Cover is fair from pasture land which does not show the usual over grazed condition.

Several pheasants observed on April 17, were the only representatives of upland game birds. Undoubtedly the area contains some sharptails and few hungarian partridge that were not seen on this day.

No predatory animals or birds were observed, however, reports indicate there are small populations of mink, muskrats, skunks and coons.

The one structure was checked and found to be in good condition with no repairs needed.

Prepared May 12, 1958  
Submitted by:

*Claude R. Alexander*  
Claude R. Alexander, Refuge Manager

APPROVED:  
*[Signature]*  
Chief, Division of Wildlife

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Cont. NR-1

(Rev. March 1953)

# WATERFOWL (Continuation Sheet)

REFUGE ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ CHASE LAKE REFUGEMONTHS OF January 1 TO April 30, 1958

(1) Species	(2) Weeks of reporting period								(3) Estimated waterfowl days use	(4) Production Broods: Estimated seen : total
	3/11	4/21	4/25	14	15	16	17	18		
<b>Swans:</b>										
Whistling										
Trumpeter										
<b>Geese:</b>										
Canada										
Cackling		30							90	
Brant										
White-fronted										
Snow										
Blue										
Other										
<b>Ducks:</b>										
Mallard										
Black	3	150	4						3000	
Gadwall										
Baldpate		10	2						200	
Pintail		20							400	
Green-winged teal	6	6	4						600	
Blue-winged teal										
Cinnamon teal			4						120	
Shoveler										
Wood			8						60	
Redhead										
Ring-necked			10						150	
Canvasback										
Scaup			18						250	
Goldeneye		40	54						1000	
Bufflehead			2						20	
Ruddy		4	2						60	
Other										
Pelicans		15	1600						16000	
Cormorant			7						140	
<b>Coot:</b>										
			6						50	

(over)



	(5) Total Days Use	(6) Peak Number	(7) Total Production
Swans			
Geese	30	30	
Ducks	2210	201	
Coots	100	0	
Pelicans	15000	1500	
Cormorant	100	0	

SUMMARY

Principal feeding areas ~~Fresh Water Unit and~~  
~~adjacent grain fields.~~

Principal nesting areas \_\_\_\_\_

Reported by ~~Glaude A. Alexander, Refuge Manager~~

INSTRUCTIONS (See Secs. 7531 through 7534, Wildlife Refuges Field Manual)

- (1) Species: In addition to the birds listed on form, other species occurring on refuge during the reporting period should be added in appropriate spaces. Special attention should be given to those species of local and national significance.
- (2) Weeks of Reporting Period: Estimated average refuge populations.
- (3) Estimated Waterfowl Days Use: Average weekly populations x number of days present for each species.
- (4) Production: Estimated number of young produced based on observations and actual counts on representative breeding areas. Brood counts should be made on two or more areas aggregating 10% of the breeding habitat. Estimates having no basis in fact should be omitted.
- (5) Total Days Use: A summary of data recorded under (3).
- (6) Peak Number: Maximum number of waterfowl present on refuge during any census of reporting period.
- (7) Total Production: A summary of data recorded under (4).

3-1750  
Form NR-1  
(Rev. March 1953)

W A T E R F O W L

REFUGE North Dakota Reservoirs - District No. 6

MONTHS OF January 1 TO April 30, 19 58

(1) Species	(2) Weeks of reporting period									
	Bonhill 1	Halfway 2	Robert 3	Lake George 4	Stoney 5	Tonahawk 6	7	8	9	10
Swans:										
Whistling										
Trumpeter										
Geese:										
Canada	✓17/58	✓25/58	✓17/58	✓25/58	✓17/58	✓17/58				
Cackling										
Brant										
White-fronted										
Snow										
Blue										
Other										
Ducks:										
Mallard	8	38	150	5	35	20				
Black										
Gadwall	6									
Baldpate	6	2	4							
Pintail	4	25	100		24	15				
Green-winged teal	2		9							
Blue-winged teal		4				2				
Cinnamon teal										
Shoveler			12			4				
Wood										
Redhead	6	24			50	6				
Ring-necked	10				15					
Canvasback	10									
Scaup	12	350	20	5	126					
Goldeneye										
Bufflehead										
Ruddy		4			50					
Other Anas		2								
Marble Oodist		2								
Least Sand Piper		1								
Coot:					40					

Int. Dup. Sec.,  
Wash., D. C. 37944